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## EXPANDED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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It has become a commonplace in 1963 to recognize that we are living in the midst of a great human upheaval. Historians will, undoubtedly, one day refer to this upheaval as a revolution. And so it is. While the struggle for better conditions, for greater dignity, and for equality is world-wide, we, in the United States of America, are observing a revolution at first hand and in quick tempo. Both history and justice require such a quick tempo. Justice delayed becomes justice denied.

In Newark, many of us for a long time have agreed with President Kennedy's plea to the nation in which he spoke of the struggle for Negro rights as a moral one. Moreover, we have participated to some degree in its solution. Certainly, our city administration and the Mayor, together with this Commission have recognized and faced the responsibilities inherent in the present situation. It is because of this, and because of convictions which I have long held, that I am happy to become associated with this Human Rights Commission. I did so with a sense of the urgency regarding the problems that beset our community, and feel that our tasks are in proportion to our opportunities for signal service to the people of this city. We here, it seems to me, must plan further and go further than seeking surface treatment of symptoms. Rather we must search for lasting cures. We cannot be interested in the mere appearances of justice in Newark. We must have its

substance. There are many kinds of walls that make for inequality other than legal ones. We should seek to recognize them and destroy them all.

There is little question that the three basic areas which must be dealt with are those of employment, housing, and education. You will understand why I, as a long time worker in the field of education, believe that in terms of ultimate solutions, the educational problem is the most fundamental of all of them. I am aware that new members of municipal commissions should normally spend their time at the beginning of their membership in being seen but not heard from too much. I have, however, determined not to wait for the operation of normal protocol. Instead, I'd like to take the liberty of discussing with you and seeking your support for taking steps to deal with the critical difficulties that beset the great system of public schools of our city.

A very sizeable portion of the boys and girls who attend Newark's elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, come from homes which are economically, socially, culturally, and educationally disadvantaged. Because of this fact, they need very special educational treatment, guidance, and help, if we are at all serious in our determination to make sure that every young American deserves and has an equal right to equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is meaningless unless there is genuine equality of education. When so many of our children come to school, handicapped in advance by the poverty of their families, by the housing in

which they live, by the discriminations they suffer because of their ethnic backgrounds, by the prejudices which they so often face, and by the lack of cultural experiences which stimulate and provide educational momentum, it should be simple to understand that these handicaps create a situation which demands such children be given exceptional and unusual help if they are to be able to overcome the difficulties which our history, our institutions, and our society has forced upon them.

These children are in need of much individual help, of the aid of skillful guidance personnel, of the assistance of experienced social workers, of specially trained reading experts, of directed cultural experiences which will develop broadened outlooks and motivate desires to reach for higher levels of achievement, of schools which are pleasant places with enough room to allow them to learn effectively, and of an atmosphere in which these children will feel that the world cares about them and respects them. Most important they need teachers who understand their problems, who are thoroughly trained and able to direct their education, who have enough time to be able to give to every individual child an adequate amount of personal direction and attention, and who have the materials with which to work effectively.

What is the actual situation in Newark - one of America's great cities? Despite the heroic efforts of that group of devoted citizens who make up the Board of Education and of the administrative leadership of our schools in having had constructed and

expanded more schools and school space in the past few years than in the combined three decades before, school space remains woefully inadequate. For this reason, only in the last few weeks, the Superintendent of Schools presented to the Board of Education a proposal for undertaking almost 34 millions of dollars of capital construction. In his proposal he pointed out that \$21,000,000 is needed to relieve present school overcrowding, which is on the critical level; \$6,720,000 is needed for construction of facilities to prevent additional serious overcrowding in the immediate future; and \$5,920,400 is needed to rehabilitate and modernize facilities which are in crying need of such treatment. The Superintendent and the Board of Education have rendered a great service to all of us in underlining these needs.

But, in effect, this very proposal is also an admission that great numbers of our children are attending school today in Newark under conditions which are inadequate and insufficient for their best educational growth. Nevertheless, sad to say, it seems clear that these most pressing and immediate needs will not be met with the great speed that they so desperately demand. Legal debt limitations and the difficulties arising out of an already over-great burden of taxation on local Newark property owners and rent payers, dictate that unless unusual and drastic measures be undertaken this program may have to take ten or more years to bring to complete fruition instead of two or three years which should be a maximum waiting period. Each year of delay means that more needs will arise

and more obsolescence and deterioration will set in. What is even worse, too many children will have gone through most of their school lives in our elementary and secondary schools deprived in some way or another and will be educated under circumstances which handicap them even further. Too many will have been in classes in which more could have easily been done but was not done because the conditions made it too difficult. You may think that the requests of the Superintendent and the Board of Education are mammoth in size but if we should really try to reduce class sizes in our disadvantaged areas so that classes would contain numbers that are small enough for the educational individualization which is so very necessary for deprived children, the request of close to 34 million dollars is probably far too modest, and many more millions of dollars would have to be spent for new construction to provide for the extra classes that would have to become available. May I underline that this reduction in class size is a bitter necessity. Its delay only helps to perpetuate existing educational inequalities.

Classrooms alone, while imperative, will not, per se, educate children. That is a task which is performed by teachers. Teaching in a big city with so many children whose learning problems are more complicated and difficult than those of their more fortunate middle-class suburban neighbors, demands the most devoted, the most experienced, and the best trained teachers. Such teachers are hard to find anywhere and are becoming ever harder to attract to cities like Newark. Certainly it is much easier to teach in the more pleasant small communities and suburban areas where problems are far

less pressing. Therefore, even if salaries in big cities like Newark were slightly higher than they are in most suburban areas, it would be difficult to compete in the recruitment of the kind of staff needed because conditions and teaching problems are so much more demanding and exacting than in these more privileged communities. Many of these communities now have an advantage over Newark (which they never had in the past): their salaries are as good as those of Newark and their teaching problems are far less demanding. A great many communities have an additional advantage: their salaries have become better than those paid to teachers in Newark. Newark is, therefore, in a most difficult position. If our city is to be certain of a sufficient supply of the very best teachers - and these are the only kind of teachers we can afford to have - then in today's market, it is clear, we can compete in finding such staff members most successfully by raising salaries to a level that will make it far more attractive and advantageous for teachers to seek employment in Newark than in any other community.

The proposal by teachers' organizations of a salary schedule beginning at \$6,000 and going to \$13,000, though it may seem self-seeking, is realistic and makes much sense if we are to secure the staff that we must have. Lest there be any question on this score, there is no doubt that the Board of Education and the city administration have sincerely tried to raise salaries to as high a point as they felt was compatible with the community's ability to pay. But this effort, a truly laudable one, still fails to go far enough to

obtain for Newark the ability to compete effectively for the very best teachers available. Money will have to be found somehow to guarantee that our children are taught by men and women who are masterful and superior performers in their profession.

What is more, should we reduce class size in our schools to a point where teachers can really work with children on an individual basis, especially during the crucial early formative years of elementary education, we will have to expand our staff by many additional scores of teachers. For every one hundred such new teachers, at least \$600,000 of additional funds will be needed. It is likely that the program envisioned here, might call for a minimum of five hundred new teachers, and this would mean a budgetary increase of at least three million dollars per year from the start.

This past year a thrilling experiment was inaugurated by the Board of Education and the administration of our schools at West Kinney Jr. High School. It was designated as "The Newark Program for Expanded Opportunities." Though the program is now but one year old, it is clear that its effect on improving the quality of education for the children who participated in it will be dramatically gratifying and worthwhile. This program involves in addition to the work of classroom teachers, the use of a team of social workers, guidance counsellors, reading experts, plus special administrative and auxiliary help. It tries to provide personal attention for each pupil in full measure and a home of cultural experiences including trips to universities, museums, zoos, attendance at musical



concerts, special assemblies, visits to industrial plants, and many other similar activities. The purpose is to help children raise their eyes to look for new and higher levels of personal goals and ambitions so that they may be stimulated to overcome the initial disadvantages that they have been burdened with. The schools must seek to provide experiences which will substitute for those that the pupils' personal circumstances have denied them.

Unfortunately, this program is confined to one school alone, and as of September, 1963, will be operating for only two of the three grades in that school, not all of it. Clearly, the program should be available, not merely to one school. It should be broadened rapidly to involve a minimum of 10,000 pupils in Newark. Yet here again we face the question of finances. The annual cost per pupil of such a program is in the vicinity of \$125 over and above the regular educational expenditure. Simple arithmetic indicates that an additional \$1,250,000 would be required. Actually, it is an extremely inexpensive investment in urban redevelopment of human beings.

For some weeks now a committee of secondary school teachers and administrators have been hard at work on an assignment to evaluate the structure of secondary schools in Newark. While I do not know what the conclusions of this committee will be in terms of recommendations to the Board of Education and the Superintendent, one thing appears clear - this committee will very probably insist that an intensive program of occupational training and guidance be



made available to the hundreds of young people in our secondary schools who are not college-bound, who too often become drop-outs and delinquents because they are not motivated by or able to cope with the academic phases of our educational program and because they are more concerned with entering the world of employment as rapidly as possible; such young people need training for jobs. Any meaningful program of occupational training will require additions to our high school of workshops, laboratories, and equipment.

It will require more teachers with very specialized training. It will require vocational counsellors who can direct young people and seek job opportunities for them. At this point once again we will find ourselves frustrated because such programs cost a great deal and the funds are not available.

It would be possible to review with you many more needs and available techniques for solving them - the desirability of pre-school cultural experiences for deprived children under the supervision of our schools, the value of publicly-supported summer camps, the necessity for a crash program of adult education, the effectiveness of cooperative job teaching programs and apprenticeship.

But foremost are those items which I have previously described:

A. School Plant

1. School building needs for relieving overcrowding and rehabilitating deterioration plants at a cost of \$33,670,400.

2. New buildings to provide space for reducing class sizes.
3. Constructing occupational workshops and laboratories for secondary youth of high school age.

The total capital outlay for such a program of construction will require a minimum total of \$60,000,000.

It should be pointed out that these items are required now and we cannot wait until 1970 or 1980 while another generation of children is short-changed.

Furthermore, such construction will produce thousands of jobs, make room for many Negro and Puerto Rican workmen, and provide possibilities for a wide-range apprenticeship training program for youth in the building trades - all advantages which must not be overlooked and must be provided for in contracts whenever we use public funds to pay for construction of public facilities.

#### B. Teacher Personnel

1. A salary schedule for teachers beginning at \$6,000 per year and going to a maximum of \$13,000. This will cost \$9,000,000 per year.
2. A major expansion of the teaching staff by 500 new positions in order to reduce class sizes at an annual cost of \$3,000,000.

#### C. Cultural Enrichment and Expanded Opportunities

The extension of the "Expanded Opportunities" type of program to 10,000 children at an annual cost of \$1,250,000.

D. Occupational Training for High School Youth

The development of job-training programs for those young people for whom our occupational opportunities at a cost of \$1,000,000 per year.

All of us must believe that racially imbalanced schools in any community, even though they are de facto, rather than deliberate, are an unhealthy reality because they perpetuate in our public schools those sinister patterns which have ghettoized our neighborhoods and housing. We must seek to correct these imbalances as rapidly and as expeditiously as the circumstances of transportation and school space will permit while at the same time striving to eliminate segregation in housing. But correcting racial imbalances will not create new school buildings; it will not provide an abundance of good teachers; it will not yield all the cultural and intellectual experiences which enrich and motivate children who have been exposed to such experiences; it will not result in a job-training program; it will not reduce class sizes. It is a goal to be sought for. But too often it means that children suffer inadequacies in one locale rather than in another. In the final analysis, the most important task of Newark's public schools is producing educated young people--educated effectively in the knowledge, skills, and values which will guarantee that they may find a desirable place for themselves whether they go on to higher education or to the workday world.

In this statement I have called for an immediate outlay of \$60,000,000 in the next three or so years for school plant growth and rehabilitation and more than \$14,000,000 per year over and above the present expenditures in the Newark school budget for current expenses. Actually, spending even more than this is needed to equalize the education of our disadvantaged youngsters. I am speaking, at best, of minima.

I am certain that if the funds were available no one would be happier to undertake the above projects than the Mayor, the City Council, the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools. The question to be asked is how can you spend money you don't have and cannot raise?

The time is long overdue when the State of New Jersey and the Federal Government can step away from their responsibility and tell Newark and other large cities to go it alone. It is unfair that all of the burden be placed on large cities which have welcomed thousands of refugees from the indignities and from the poverty of educational, political, and social opportunity of other sections of our country. In this sense, Newark is a "federally-impacted" city that deserves and must be given special aid.

It is good to hear the decisions of the State Commissioner of Education that communities are directed to end educational inequality. It is encouraging to know that the Governor opposed the effects of inadequate education upon children and the effects of segregation

of racial groups in public schools. It is enheartening to hear President Kennedy demand that every Negro child deserves the right to go to the best possible school. But the justice and equality which we must have in our schools cannot be produced by words, legal rulings, and oratory alone important as it is that these things be said. What is needed is tangible and material support.

For all the reasons I have outlined above, may I urge that this commission call upon the Mayor to invite the Governor, the State Commissioner of Education, the presidents of both houses of the Legislature, the two members of the United States Senate from New Jersey, the three members of the House of Representatives who serve Newark in Congress, the United States Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Superintendent of Schools of Newark, the President of the Newark Board of Education, and the Chairman of this Commission to a meeting on Educational Equality. Such a meeting shall explore the needs of Newark's schools in terms of its disadvantaged pupils, and shall seek practical steps resulting in immediate action to make funds available for the capital needs of school construction and funds for the next two decades to make possible the additional expenditures required to reduce class sizes, increase the salaries of teachers, make available a program of expanded opportunities to every child who needs it, and to provide for an extensive program of occupational training.

Out of this meeting can grow a model for the nation to demonstrate the strength, the determination, and the speed with

which our democracy can excise social evil and fulfil its ideals in practice.

In presenting this proposal and the problems it seeks to deal with, I should like to underscore that Newark's public schools are performing a splendid job and are training a fine set of young people of whom our community and the world can be justifiably proud. The school with which I am associated is but one example of this fact. But our pride in our accomplishments should never allow us to overlook the totality of the problem. We can perform the task. What we need is help from those who can give it and whose words have pledged them to help deliver it.

Thank you for your patience.